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Military Leadership

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THE military profession, and rightfully so, has no monopoly on leadership. In every walk of life, in every industry, in every government, in every phase of human endeavor, there must be leaders as well as followers. Today, more than ever in history, the Army is in need of leadership of the highest caliber. Science and modern developments have increased the complexity of warfare, yet no matter how complicated warfare may become, it will always be waged by men. The men who are capable of leading others are indispensable in waging a successful war. It follows, then, that we must make certain that every potential leader is discovered early and developed rapidly, for the forward progress and the success of our Army are dependent upon the quality and efficiency of our military leaders.

Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the military leader are twofold. They are:

1. *Accomplishment of the mission.*—The primary duty of the military leader is the accomplishment of his assigned mission. Everything else, even the welfare of his men, is subordinate.

2. *Duty to his subordinates.*—The secondary responsibility of the military leader lies in his duty to his subordinates. It is rarely possible to accomplish successfully any assigned military mission without paying particular attention to the *morale*

and *esprit* of subordinates. In the military service, the subordinate is peculiarly dependent upon his leader and can do little to improve conditions if they are neglected by his superior.

Indications

There are four characteristics of a military organization that are accurate indicators of success or failure in the exercise of leadership, namely discipline, morale, *esprit de corps*, and efficiency.

Discipline

Discipline is the state of order and obedience existing within an organization. It involves the ready subordination of the will of the individual for the good of the organization. The need for discipline can best be inculcated in the individual by appealing to his sense of reason. Discipline can be created within a military organization by training, judicious use of punishments and rewards, and by instilling confidence and a sense of responsibility in each individual. Military discipline is no more than the extension and specialized application of the discipline of any organized society.

Morale

Morale is the manifestation of the mental and emotional state of the individual. The importance of morale cannot be over-emphasized since it is a great contributing factor to the efficiency of an organization.

Esprit de Corps

Esprit de corps is the manifestation of the mental and emotional state of an organization. An organization with high *esprit de corps* can accomplish its assigned mission in spite of seemingly insurmountable odds. It has been proved that an individual's pride in his organization is an indication of high morale and efficiency. *Esprit de corps* in a military organization can be accomplished by good leaders.

Efficiency

Efficiency in a military organization is the ability to accomplish successfully any reasonable assigned task, or to initiate suitable action in the absence of orders. Efficiency within a military organization can be developed by sound training and effective administration by competent military leaders. It is enhanced by good discipline, high morale, and *esprit de corps*.

Psychology

Psychology, the study of human behavior, is closely linked with leadership. With a knowledge of how human beings respond to a particular set of circumstances and with an understanding of the basic factors that control human behavior, the military leader can capitalize on favorable reactions and minimize unfavorable ones.

Ethics

Ethics, the science of moral duty, is very closely allied with the art of leadership.

The quality of leadership is not inherent. Developing the art of leadership is a continuing process which depends upon traits which can be developed, and upon the application of principles which can be learned

A knowledge of ethics will assist materially in dealing with subordinates, in deciding whether a given course of action is morally right or wrong. Conscientious application of moral principles will ensure that the leader does not embark on a

course of action that violates such principles, for if he does the leader will lower his stature in the eyes of his subordinates. Temporizing with moral principles or standards may secure a temporary advantage, or fleeting popularity, but in the long run the leader will profit by strict adherence to the highest standards of honor and integrity.

Leadership Principles

The United States Army has adopted 11 leadership principles, the results of an analysis of outstanding leadership displayed by successful personalities, both military and civilian. A thorough study of these principles, combined with putting them into actual practice, will develop the high caliber of leadership so urgently needed in our Army. The 11 principles, together with a brief discussion of them, are listed below. They apply equally at all echelons of command.

Know Your Job

To know his job thoroughly, the leader must possess a wide knowledge of the technical and tactical aspects of the operation of his organization. He also must possess a sound understanding of human relations. Further, he must have a working knowledge of the duties, responsibilities, and problems of his subordinates.

Know Yourself and Seek Improvement

Any individual who does not know his capabilities and limitations is not master

of himself. It is the duty of every leader to recognize his strengths and weaknesses, to capitalize on his strong points, and strive to improve his weaknesses. If he fails to do this, he cannot hope to be successful as a leader.

Know Your Men and Look Out for Their Welfare

A leader must make a conscientious effort to observe the living conditions of his subordinates and to ensure that they are as comfortable, well cared for, and as contented as circumstances permit. He must see his subordinates and let them see him; he must be friendly and approachable. He must ensure that a fair and equitable distribution of such privileges as passes, leaves, and rotation are in effect and adhered to. By neglecting the welfare of his subordinates, the leader indicates indifference and, as a consequence, forfeits the trust and confidence of the followers. As a result, he will not be able to obtain maximum effectiveness in the employment of his command.

Keep Your Men Informed

The subordinate who is well informed about the mission, the situation, and the purpose of any particular task is much more effective than the one who is not "in the big picture." The leader who fails to make essential information available to subordinates will find that they are performing blindly and without purpose; under these conditions maximum effectiveness cannot be obtained. However, military commanders at all levels must realize that security requirements may impose restrictions or limitations on the information that can be imparted to subordinates and be governed accordingly.

Set the Example

The American youth look instinctively to their superiors or leaders for patterns of conduct which they emulate or use as an excuse for their own misbehavior or shortcomings. By his appearance and conduct, a good military leader can evoke praise, pride, and the desire to emulate him. By an outstanding performance of duty, mental alertness, good grooming, and proper dress, the leader can set the stand-

ards for the followers. The leader who appears in an unfavorable light before his subordinates destroys the mutual respect that must exist between them.

Ensure That the Task Is Understood, Supervised, and Accomplished

The leader must give clear, concise orders that cannot be misunderstood. Then, by close supervision, he must ensure that his orders are properly and promptly executed. The ability to think logically and to issue clear, concise, positive orders can be developed. Through study and practice, the able leader will make wise use of his subordinates to carry out effective supervision. Any commander of a large military organization who fails to make proper and adequate use of his staff and subordinate commanders in supervising his leadership program demonstrates a fundamental weakness in leadership.

Train Your Men as a Team

An effective leader will emphasize team training, predicated on modern, realistic conditions. All training must be purposeful and the reason for training as a team stressed and understood by all members of the organization. The highest standards of discipline and teamwork must be demanded by the leader. The leader must make sure that the best available facilities for team training are provided. Our modern armies are complex organizations involving many different arms and services, all working together as a team toward a common end. Each arm and service must understand where it fits into the over-all team. The commander who fails to foster teamwork will not obtain the desired degree of unit efficiency.

Make Sound and Timely Decisions

In order to make sound and timely decisions, the leader must develop logical and orderly thought processes. The ability to make a rapid estimate of any situation

and arrive at a sound decision can be developed by constant study and practice in making estimates. This ability is an essential element of successful leadership. The uncertain leader creates a spirit of vacillation, a lack of confidence, hesitancy, and indecision within the organization itself. However, when the situation demands a change in plans, the leader must act promptly without fear that subordinates may consider such actions as vacillatory.

Seek Responsibility and Develop a Sense of Responsibility Among Subordinates

By seeking responsibility, the leader develops himself professionally and increases his potential abilities. The leader must demonstrate that he is ready and willing to accept responsibility. However, the proper delegation of responsibility and authority to subordinates likewise is a sound attribute of leadership. A reluctance to delegate responsibility and authority is a definite weakness and will result in hindering the development of a sense of responsibility among subordinates.

Employ Your Command in Accordance With Its Capabilities

To employ his command properly, the leader must know, understand, and apply the principles of war. He must have a thorough knowledge of the tactical and administrative capabilities and limitations of his organization. The leader must make every effort to equalize tasks, over appropriate periods of time, among the several elements of his command. To do less than this may spell failure in accomplishing the mission.

Take Responsibility for Your Actions

The commander of a military organization is responsible for everything his organization does, whether it be good or bad. The leader must recognize and acknowledge this concept. Any effort by the leader to evade this responsibility will destroy the bond of loyalty and respect that must

exist between the commander and his subordinates in a military organization.

Leadership Traits

Leadership traits are human qualities the possession of which is of great value to the military leader. They simplify the task of leadership, and assist greatly in winning confidence, respect, and loyal cooperation. A study of our Nation's great military leaders reveals that none of them possessed all the leadership traits to the maximum degree, but that deficiencies in some traits were compensated for by strengths in others. The following list of leadership traits is by no means all-inclusive, but it does contain those of paramount importance to a successful military leader.

1. *Alertness*.—Alertness is vigilance, promptness, and wide-awakeness.

2. *Bearing*.—Bearing denotes desirable physical appearance, dress, and deportment.

3. *Courage*.—Courage must be both physical and moral.

4. *Decisiveness*.—Decisiveness is the ability to make decisions promptly when indicated and announce them authoritatively, concisely, and clearly.

5. *Dependability*.—Dependability is the doing of one's duty with or without supervision.

6. *Endurance*.—Endurance, both mental and physical, is necessary to continue and complete any reasonable task.

7. *Enthusiasm*.—Enthusiasm is the positive zeal or interest in a task at hand. It is communicated easily to subordinates.

8. *Force*.—Force is the ability to impose one's will upon another.

9. *Humility*.—Humility is freedom from arrogance and unjustifiable pride.

10. *Humor*.—Humor is the capacity to appreciate the many amusing or whimsical happenings of our everyday life, especially those which pertain to the leader himself.

11. *Initiative*.—Initiative is the willingness to act in the absence of orders and

to offer well-considered recommendations for the improvement of the organization.

12. *Integrity*.—Integrity is the honesty and moral character of the leader. It must be unquestioned.

13. *Intelligence*.—Intelligence is the intellect of the leader which must be adequate to master the problems presented.

14. *Judgment*.—Judgment is the power of the mind to weigh various factors and arrive at wise decisions.

15. *Justice*.—Justice is being equitable and impartial in bestowing favors and punishment.

16. *Loyalty*.—Loyalty must extend both up and down. A leader cannot expect loyalty from his subordinates unless he is conspicuously loyal to them as well as to his superiors.

17. *Sympathy*.—Sympathy is the capacity of sharing the feelings of those with whom one is associated.

18. *Tact*.—Tact is the ability to deal with subordinates and superiors in an appropriate manner without giving offense.

19. *Unselfishness*.—Unselfishness is the studied avoidance of caring for or providing for one's own comfort or advantage at the expense of others.

Relationship Between Leadership And Command

We, in the military, like to think of military leadership as being exercised within the command framework of the organization. Commanders of military organizations must accept responsibility for and exercise leadership when dealing with subordinates under their command.

Proper training in leadership is the crux of successful combat operations. Battlefield conditions demand the making of decisions and the carrying on of operations which test the leadership ability of officers and noncommissioned officers of all ranks and grades to an extent which does

not exist elsewhere. It is impossible to bridge completely the gap between training and conditions as they exist on the battlefield. Factors which may damage the combat potential of a military organization include fear, panic, discouragement, isolation, and lack of confidence in the organization or leader. Normally, it is the commander of the small unit who must counteract such factors. However, it is the leader of the larger unit who trains and indoctrinates him in those traits of leadership which should be instrumental in counteracting the disintegrating factors. The greatest opportunities for fear and panic usually occur during the baptism of fire, retrograde movements, or when units are widely dispersed or small units become isolated. Fear cannot be prevented, but it can be controlled within small units by competent leaders. Panic can be prevented if fear is controlled.

Objective of Military Leadership

The objective of military leadership is the creation and maintenance of military organizations which will loyally and willingly accomplish any reasonable task assigned or indicated, even in the absence of orders. The proper application of leadership principles will assist materially in creating an efficient, well-disciplined, military organization possessing high morale and *esprit de corps*. Developing the art of leadership in the military profession is a continuing process which involves the recognition and practice of the basic traits of leadership, and the understanding and application of sound leadership principles and techniques.

Leadership is *not* inherent; it depends upon traits which can be developed, and upon the application of sound leadership principles which can be learned.

We can increase our military potentials by developing more and better leaders.